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# University of Illinois Trustees Ponder Role of Birchite Classics Scholar

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URBANA, Ill., March 14—A

decision on the right of a national John Birch Society leader to hold a professorship without censure confronts the University of Illinois trustees at their regular meeting next Wednesday.

A 53-year-old classics scholar Dr. Revilo P. Oliver, a member of the Birch national council, is the center of the controversy.

The controversy was touched off by an article last month in American Opinion. The article said that President Kennedy had "collaborated" with Premier Khrushchev to stage a "sham embargo of Cuba." It said that Mr. Kennedy had become a political liability to the Communist conspiracy, which it said ordered his assassination as part of a systematic "take over."

Dr. Oliver elaborated on this in the March issue of the same magazine, which is edited by Robert H. W. Welch Jr., founder of the ultra-rightist society.

In a rare interview, Dr. Oliver said that his situation involved no question of academic freedom but only the freedom of any American to collect facts as a private individual.

The scholar also renewed his attack on Chief Justice Earl Warren, challenging him to prove he was not a "pal" of Mr. Khrushchev.

## Issue Divides Faculty

Disturbed by "the massive public reaction" to the articles, which brought a flood of mail, David D. Henry, the university president, asked the faculty son-ate's academic freedom committee to advise him in light of the "professional standards" expected of professors.

The committee's report, to go to the trustees Wednesday, is still secret. It is expected to say that political views should not be grounds for dismissal but that the university has a right to inquire into them to maintain a sort of code of ethics.

Dr. Oliver is not under charges, and his dismissal is not up for consideration.

The faculty is split on the issue. The Law College faculty leads a faction that holds a professor's political views are "not within the legitimate official concern of the university government." The university chapter of the American Association of University Professors applauded Dr. Henry's action and said the "particular character" of Dr. Oliver's statements made the professor's conduct "subject to review."

Politically, Dr. Oliver is without any public support from his colleagues, and few students agree with him. Professors who belong to the American Civil Liberties Union hope they will not have to defend him, but they would if necessary.

## Can Read 11 Languages

The son of a Corpus Christi businessman, Dr. Oliver said he could "read and handle" 11 languages and had "worked through" Sanskrit before leaving high school. He teaches advanced graduate and undergraduate courses in Latin and Greek, having about 20 students. His degrees are from Pomona College and the University of Illinois.

He said he had been conservative since 1936 but really began to take the Communist threat seriously while he was "in an extremely secret intelligence agency during the so-called Second World War." He added that the agency, which he said was too secret to name, was not the Office of Strategic Services, which he called "the Office of Soviet Stooges." He said that the Central Intelligence Agency had since absorbed the agency he was in.

Pentagon records show that he was a "civilian research analyst (crypto analytical)" in the "Army Signal Services at large" in Arlington, Va., from 1942 to 1945.

## Opposed Fluoridation

He had a Fulbright scholarship in Italy in 1953-54 and a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1946-1947.

He has asserted he was an organizer of the John Birch Society. He was a leader in the fight against fluoridation of the local water system in 1957 on the ground that fluoridation was "a pilot study for totalitarianism."

Six feet two inches tall and weighing 210 pounds, Dr. Oliver has the manner of a Spanish grandee. He has a large, square head, his graying hair is in a pompadour and he has a thick mustache.

He speaks slowly and gravely. His humor is pedantic when not somewhat sarcastic. When off the Birchite subjects, his conversation has self-conscious brilliance, even charm.

He said that on Nov. 22, the day President Kennedy was assassinated, he received telephone threats to his life even before Mr. Kennedy reached the hospital in Dallas.

The critical letters that "really scared" him, he said, were those that referred to the late President in terms like "our Savior."

## Position Is Clarified

"He played the part of a President who was in office while the Communist conspiracy made great progress in all parts of the world," Dr. Oliver said.

He said that part of his two articles in American Opinion, both called "Marxism in Dallas," had been misinterpreted. He said his position was that Mr. Kennedy's usefulness to the Communist conspiracy had ceased, not that Mr. Kennedy's "memory will be cherished with distaste."

Dr. Oliver said he tried to verify everything he could, even by telephone calls to people in Washington and New York, who have "extensive files."

He was asked about a recent written statement that "the notorious Earl Warren spends his vacations in Soviet Russia as the guest of his pal, Nikita Khrushchev."

Dr. Oliver replied he was



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**OUTSPOKEN SCHOLAR:** Dr. Revilo P. Oliver, who is center of controversy at University of Illinois.

standing by this charge until he got a specific denial from Mr. Warren on published reports that he visited Premier Khrushchev in 1963 and President Tito of Yugoslavia in 1962.

In Washington, the information officer for the Supreme Court said he knew of only one "official" visit by Justice Warren, in 1959 to the American fair in Moscow.

Newspaper files contain reports of a visit by Mr. and Mrs. Warren to Moscow for the American exhibition there in 1959 and a visit by Mr. Warren with President Tito in 1962. They also show a visit on Aug. 16, 1963, with Premier Khrushchev, in the company of Drew Pearson, the columnist, at Gagra on the Black Sea, and a later journey from Gagra by "a private yacht" to Istanbul.

When asked about local Birch Society activities, Dr. Oliver said he had no part in them.

Dr. Oliver said that he wrote academic articles in English, French, Italian and Latin, and Latin by preference.

"It was with the greatest re-